

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MONTEV 02500 071630Z

67

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /057 W

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R 071509Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1646

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 2500

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, VE, UY

SUBJ: BREAK IN RELATIONS WITH VENEZUELA

REF: MONTEVIDEO 2493 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: HAVING ATTEMPTED TO AVOID A RUPTURE OFR SOME DAYS, THE GOU ABRUPTLY CHANGED COURSE ON JULY 6 AND DECLARED THE VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR AND HIS DCM AS PERSONA NON GRATA. WE BELIEVE THE CHANGE REFLECTED TWO THINGS. FIRST, THE GOU DEEPLY RESENTED THE VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR'S HAVING MADE CHARGES TO THE PRESS AND WIRE SERVICES EVEN BEFORE GOING TO THE FONOFF AND FOR HAVING CONDUCTED A PARALLEL INVESTIGATION. SECOND, URUGUAY PROBABLY BELIEVED VENEZUELA WAS ABOUT TO BREAK RELATIONS AND DECIDED TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE--IN FACT, A FONOFF SPOKESMAN ALL BUT SAID SO TO THE PRESS LAST EVENING. A VENEZUELAN NOTE, DELIVERED THE AFTERNOON OF JULY 6, WAS DESCRIBED AS HAVING SUSPENDED RATHER THAN BROKEN RELATIONS. THE OUSTED VENEZUELAN LEAVE THE EVENING OF JULY 7. THE COLOMBIAN EMBASSY WILL ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR VENEZUELAN INTERESTS HERE. END SUMMARY.

2. GOU HAD, THROUGH JULY 5, ATTEMPTED TO OVERCOME DIFFERENCES WITH VENEZUELA. IN ADDITION TO APOLOGIES, IT HAD EVEN OFFERED TO SEND FONMIN BLANCO TO CARACAS IN WHAT WOULD
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PAGE 02 MONTEV 02500 071630Z

HAVE BEEN A HAT IN HAND TRIP. ITS HARDENED ATTITUDE ON

JULY 6, WHICH LED TO THE EXPULSION OF VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR RAMOS AND DCM BECERRA, PROBABLY OWED TO TWO THINGS. FIRST, THE GOU KEENLY RESENTED RAMOS' HANDLING OF THE AFFAIR. THE AMBASSADOR NOT ONLY DID NOT CONFINE HIMSELF TO THE PROPER CHANNELS FOR DIPLOMATIC PROTEST, BUT ALSO WENT PUBLIC, PROTESTING AND MAKING CHARGES TO THE PRESS AND WIRE SERVICES EVEN BEFORE INFORMING THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. ALSO, HIS CONDUCTING A PRIVATE INVESTIGATION WITH WHAT GOU SOURCES HAVE CALLED "EMPLOYED THUGS" RANKLED. SECONDLY, WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE GOU ACTED TO DECLARE THE VENEZUELAN PERSONA NON GRATA IN THE BELIEF THAT THE GOV WAS ABOUT TO MOVE AND IT WANTED TO GET ITS LICKS IN FIRST.

3. THE PRESS QUESTIONED FONOFF DIRECTOR OF FOREIGN POLICY ALVAREZ ABOUT THE BREAK ON THE EVENING OF JULY 6. ALVAREZ POINTEDLY STATED THAT THE FIRST WORD THE MINISTRY HAD OF VENEZUELA'S HAVING "SUSPENDED" (NOT BROKEN) RELATIONS HAD BEEN AT 1515 THAT AFTERNOON WHEN THE VENEZUELAN EMBASSY DELIVERED ITS NOTE. THIS, OF COURSE, WAS SOME TIME AFTER THE ISSUANCE OF THE COMMUNIQUE (SEE REFTTEL) PNGING RAMOS AND BECERRA. ACCORDING TO ALVAREZ, THE FIRST DIRECT WORD FROM CARACAS FROM URUGUAYAN AMBASSADOR LUPINACCI CAME AT 1730. LUPINACCI REPORTED HAVING BEEN CALLED IN AT 1030 AND GIVEN A SIMILAR MESSAGE.

4. THE FONOFF SPOKESMAN ALSO DISCUSSED WITH REPORTERS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SUSPENSION IN RELATIONS AND A BREAK, EXPLAINING THAT IT WAS LESS OF A RUPTURE AND PROBABLY WOULD PROVE TO BE OF SHORTER DURATION.

5. RAMOS AND BECERRA WILL DEPART MONTEVIDEO THE EVENING OF JULY 7. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, COLOMBIA WILL ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR VENEZUELAN INTERESTS HERE, INCLUDING THE ASYLEES (2, WE BELIEVE) IN THE VENEZUELAN EMBASSY. SIRACUSA

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